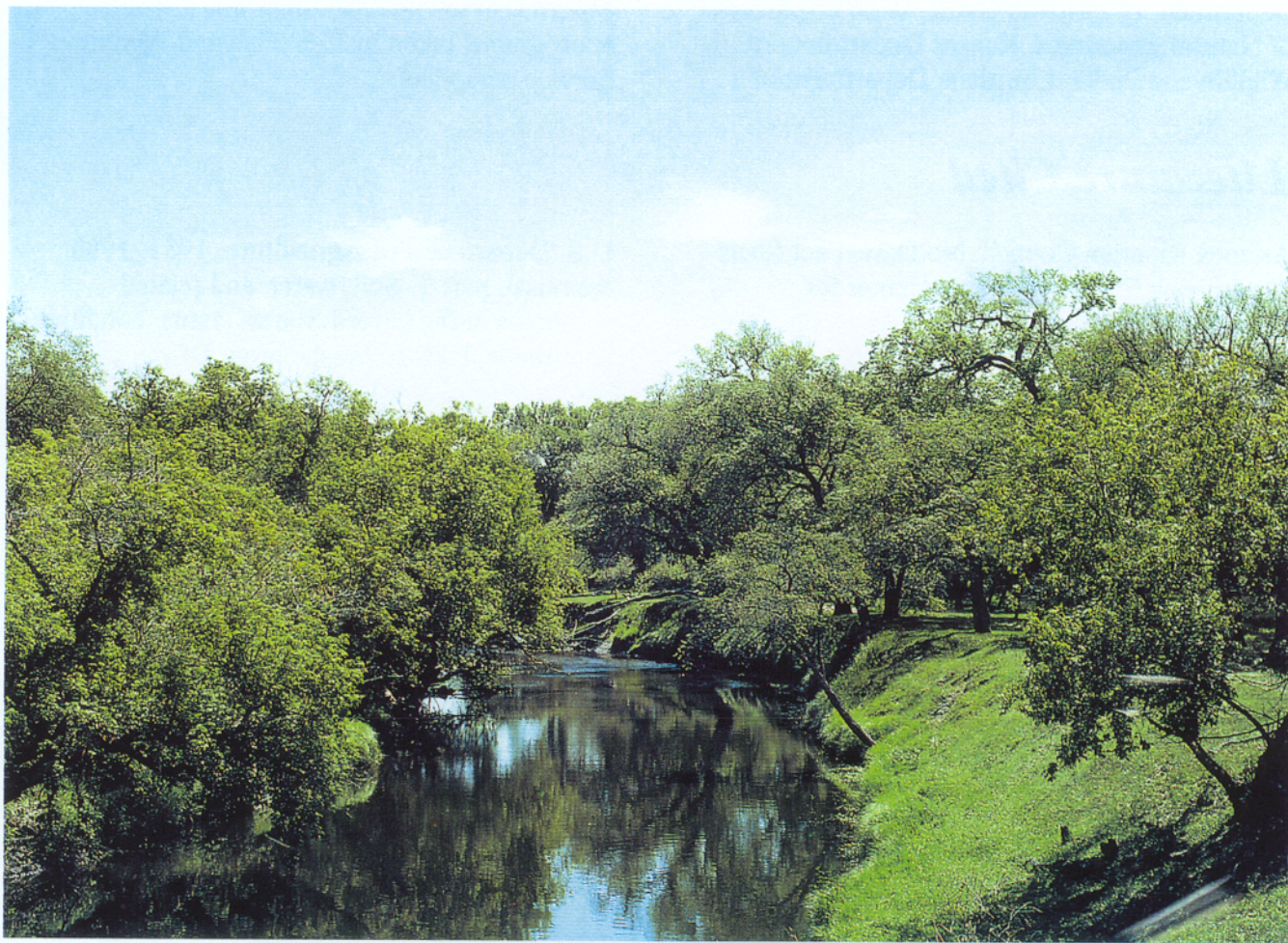


On July 23, 1997, the Acting Director of the Service distributed a "Dear Colleague" letter that transmitted the Operational Draft to the Directors of 10 Federal agencies having a direct or peripheral interest in riparian areas. The same letter was sent to the Directors of the State resource agency in each of the 22 states in the riparian definition's "Area of Applicability". This transmittal letter requested that a critical review be conducted by each agency or state before the Service formally adopted the definition and conventions. The Service made it clear in the cover letter that the agency was pleased with the

current product, but was willing to consider changes based on the input of others. The Western Regional Offices provided the Acting Director's July 23, 1997 letter and copies of the Operational Draft to additional State and Federal Agencies and non-governmental entities to achieve the most comprehensive review possible.

Input from this review was considered by the Service during a final review of the document in early November, 1997. Those agencies that provided input are included in the Acknowledgments section.



Forested, mixed deciduous species along the Sheyenne River, North Dakota.